

PART

1

Identity and Ideology

This book, *Understandings of Ideologies*, explores the idea that your identity and citizenship can be closely related to your beliefs and values and how you may see and respond to the world—your ideology. The Key Issue of this course is: *To what extent should we embrace an ideology?* Part 1 of this text deals with the connection between ideology and identity. It explores factors that might influence our individual and collective beliefs and values, such as our physical environment or our cultural backgrounds, that shape our experiences and our attitudes. We will also examine the characteristics of ideologies, such as how ideologies interpret the past, or see possibilities in the future. Part 1 will also allow you to identify themes of ideologies: nation, class, religion, and the environment. You will focus on the values of collectivism and individualism and how these are tied into our own identity and also into ideologies.

The Related Issue for Part 1 is: *Should ideology be the foundation of identity?* When you finish Part 1, you will have examined relationships between identity and ideology and be prepared to begin to analyze the extent to which your identity should be shaped by an ideology.

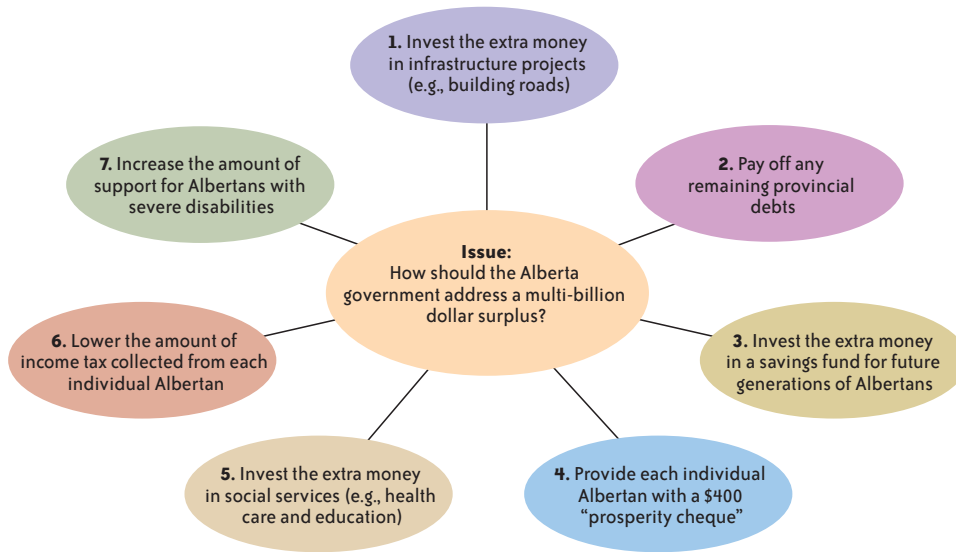
Consider the example of what a government could do if it found that it had “too much money”—in other words, a surplus in its budget. This is what the Alberta government faced in 2005—a surplus of over \$8 billion. It had to decide how to address this issue, and people came up with many suggestions. If you were one of the decision makers in Alberta’s provincial government, which of the following options would you choose?

Part 1:
*Should ideology be
the foundation of
identity?*

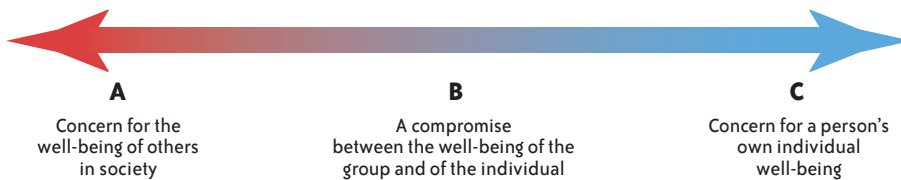
Chapter 1:
**Exploring Different
Ways of Thinking**
*On which beliefs and
values should my
ideology be based?*

Chapter 2:
**Exploring
Individualism**
*Should the values of
individualism shape
an ideology?*

Chapter 3:
**Exploring
Collectivism**
*Should the values of
collectivism shape
an ideology?*



Now consider the following spectrum, and decide where each of these seven options might be placed (position A, B, or C):



In the end, the Alberta government implemented several of these ideas, including spending on infrastructure and providing each individual Albertan with a \$400 “prosperity cheque.” What would you have done with a \$400 cheque?

How to address an issue, such as a budget surplus, is a matter of choice. In Canada, a liberal democracy with a mixed economy, the type of society in which we live is also a matter of choice. The type of society that we have now, including its political and economic system, is the result of choices that people have made in the past. The type of society that we will have in the future will depend on the choices we make now.

But what influences people’s choices? As you saw when deciding where to place various budget surplus options on a spectrum, the choices we make depend on our beliefs and values and ways of thinking—our ideology. In the case of the budget surplus example, some options were based on the belief that we should show concern for others in society. Other options reflected the belief that individuals are responsible for their own well-being.

Which of the budget surplus options do you favour? What does that show about your beliefs and values? What contributes to the development of your beliefs and values? To what extent is your identity shaped by a system of beliefs and values—an ideology?

Visit the LearnAlberta.ca website at www.LearnAlberta.ca and select Social Studies and Grade 12 resources; then, select the *Understandings of Ideologies* digital resource for fully interactive learning scenarios entitled ExCite (Exploring Citizenship). These scenarios are directly related to the issues and concepts and the four parts in the Student Resource to enhance learning.

